









# From the Hungarian

By George Mikes

TIBOR MILES:  
Genius of Hungarian Classic Poetry  
32pp. Tural Press. £2.50.

I have received, by post, a blue paperback volume: Hungarian poems from Bálint Balassa to Attila József, translated into English. I started reading it with great suspicion but after five minutes I exclaimed "that's it!"—the it being a worthy translation of the Hungarian originals into English. The verse; the kind of translation for which I have been searching for almost forty years, ever since I came to this country; the kind of translation which, I have to confess and shall confess soon in greater detail, I attempted myself and failed.

I have, of course, read a great deal of English poetry, from Chaucer through Eliot to Dylan Thomas; I have admired many poets, been deeply impressed by some and felt close personal affinity with a few. I have learnt all the obligatory quotations by heart and even discovered a few, lesser known ones, to my own delight. There is a tremendous difference between studying something and having been brought up on it. It is one thing to "read" a poem like "and quite another thing, relishing and loving every image, every metaphor, every word. Mother's milk is one thing; avocado pear with vinaigrette is another.

There are many English poems that I know in Hungarian translation about four versions of "The Raven" (a virtuoso piece, a black Pagani violin concerto for trans-lators) while I can just recall a few fragments from the original. The same goes for Milton. He will always remain for me the Milton as translated by George F. Alcock, passionate, incisive, semi-original poetry for which Milton supplied the raw material.

Hungarian literature is the literature of a small Central European nation, with a large number of good and with a few truly great prose writers. But Hungarian poetry—as I and a few other Hungarians have desperately tried to convey—belongs to quite a different category. The Hungarians have produced about half a dozen poetic geniuses who would rank among the Goethes, Keates and Dantes of this world, had they not been writing in their peculiar, isolated, agglutinative, Pseudo-Latin mother-tongue. A few people have believed and others have nodded politely and murmured "how interesting", or "is that so?" We wanted to prove our point but realised that it was almost impossible. "Why is it?" we asked. Hundreds of times that all great poetry of the world has been beautifully translated into Hungarian but no foreign, far alone Hungarian, poetry has been adequately translated into English? (apart from such noble exceptions, few and far between, as Dorothy Sayers' *Diogenes*, *Comedy* translation and Gilbert Murray's versions of the Greek tragedies).

It was nearly twenty-five years ago that Arthur Koestler and I set out to remedy, at least partially, this invidious situation. Our aim was to render one of the poetic geniuses of our age, Attila József, into English. Attila was a close friend of Arthur's and I, too, knew him well, so this was a task near to our hearts. We started working with great enthusiasm and also with great delight. We kept phoning each other several times a day, just to read out a line or two we had just translated and thought magnificent. Slowly it dawned on us that few people shared our admiration for our translations. Koestler showed our effort to Auden and asked him if it was obvious from our translations that Attila József was one of the great poetic geniuses of this century. According to Auden this was not quite obvious. So we abandoned our project.

And this is exactly the point. The poor poet is completely in his translator's hands. Here we published an inadequate translation, few people would have hit upon the point that Koestler and Mikes are no great translators of poetry but they would have jumped to the conclusion that Attila József had been vastly over-translated by his Hungarian translators. Mikes, one of Hungary's Great Six—remarked that the trouble was that you always judged the original through the translation because you could not judge the translation. Babis himself had translated the *Divine Comedy* and discussed in an essay Károly Szász's not very successful previous translation. Babis said that judging by Szász's translation the Hungarian public must have thought that the *Divine Comedy* was a scholastic exercise rather than a great poem.

Why is it then that great and rich literatures (like English and French) are poor in translations; while poor, or at least small, literatures are rich in them? Some of the answers are obvious. (By the way, I must make it clear that I am speaking of translation of poetry only. The English are not that fond of translating foreign prose either and translated books rarely exceed 5 per cent of their total, while in Germany, at one time, they reached 40 per cent. Nevertheless, great prose works from Cervantes through Tolstoy and Proust to Solzhenitsyn always appear in English.) The first obvious answer is literary chauvinistic piggy. The English feel they do not need poets like Vörösmarty or Norvaiš, they are quite content with Shelley and Wordsworth. The French are even worse. Babis in his essay states that there is no truer approach between the cultures of two nations than the understanding of each other's poetry. This, however, he goes on, must be proper, faithful translation in rhymes. As the French language is utterly unsuited for adoption of many rhythms, France cast herself off from one of the most important means of understanding others. The same goes for the English, too.

Another obvious reason is the lack of knowledge of languages. Many great Hungarian poets have learnt six or seven foreign languages. Any could not speak a word of English but he knew the

language well and his three Shakespeare translations (*Hamlet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *King John*) are as immortal as the originals. Many Shakespeare plays are being translated again and again but few people would dare to touch the three translated by Arany. In translation there always exists a final version, which cannot be improved upon. Babis admitted that whenever he felt that Szász had hit upon the best possible version he just took it over, without hesitation or scruples. Why replace perfection with the second-best? Translated masterpieces—or rather translated masterpieces—are no more rarer, according to Babis, than original masterpieces.

The English have been trying to overcome their lack of knowledge of languages by using two translators instead of one. A foreign student—a Hungarian, Latvian, Korean or whatever—supplies a rough translation and then an English poet shapes this mass into what he regards as proper English poetry. The result is no more encouraging than two people writing lyric poetry together: some one supplying the thoughts and emotions, the other the shape and the rhymes. Or it is like two people together in the same game, on the same side: one inventing the moves and thinking out tactics, the other performing the kicking, based on the advice. Alas, there are certain things one person cannot do alone; there are others in which two are much less than one.

The English often realize the futility of such an exercise and give us clumsy, word-by-word translations of poems, simply conveying the bare meaning. These are better than bad rhyming translations—better because they are so bad that everyone makes the proper allowance.

To what extent is the English language to be blamed for this dearth of translations? Is it much more suitable for the translation of poetry than French? Yes and no. English is superbly concise; it can say more in fewer words than any other language; and it has thousands of monosyllables—an extremely useful commodity for translators. But it has grave drawbacks, too. It is utterly unsuited for classical metres; hexameters and pentameters are regarded as impossible in English. (The main difficulty lies in the lack of a clear sonnet but this, I feel, could be overcome.) If I set out to write a new epic in Homeric style I should begin:

Sing poet/oh of/daeds of/boadful/  
Goddess of/arts and/crafts/Pallas  
Athena the/wise.

Great poetic beauty would follow later; at the moment I am talking of the metre. It is a perfect distich. It would need, I agree, tradition behind it, the establishment of certain conventions and rules. The trouble with the classical metres was the same as the trouble with modern verse translations: they would have needed determination and perseverance. In German it is hopeless; they do not have enough short syllables. The other trouble is rhyming. The English insist on pure



Edgar Allan Poe, a brush drawing in Indian ink by Mmet in 1860 from a photograph which had probably been supplied by him. The portrait is in a festive exhibition of Mmet's prints and drawings many of them unfamiliar, to June 19.

rhymes and assonance is despised and only used in comic poetry. A great pity. Assonance, in the hand of real masters, can be beautiful.

An increasing number of poets regard rhyme and rhythm as old-fashioned, embroidery, an aversive decoration. It is more difficult to find the rhyme or phrase I believe—even if branded a reactionary flat-earth man—that rhyme and rhythm are the soul and life-blood of poetry. Poetry without rhyme and rhythm is like music without melody and rhythm like food without taste; like women without beauty. But even if these views are rejected, when it comes to the translation of rhythmic and rhyming verse, it should be translated in the rhythm and rhymes of the original, otherwise the translation will completely fail to convey its flavour. Change words; change sentences, similes, metaphors; vary images, but keep the rhythm and rhyming system of the original, forget about translating poetry. And that is, alas, what the English have done and are doing.

And that is why Tibor Miles' translations in me. When I started his work in greater detail, I cooled somewhat, the flame turned to amber. He is a superb versifier but no poet. And although this is better way round, it is not ideal. He is also a bit of a saint. He is his own publisher. A man of no great

wealth—to put it extremely mildly—had a limited number of copies printed at his own expense because he wanted to see his beloved Mikes in print, in English. He is a poet who had lived with the poems day and night, woke up in the middle of the night, suddenly finding the rhyme or phrase I had been searching for for weeks. "September Végén" (At Late September):

Although in the dale garden flowers still bloom  
Still green is the aspen in front  
But see over there wintry hush  
Deep snow covering the mound  
at the cape.

His skill is tremendous; his enthusiasm catching. The trouble is his knowledge of English is not quite adequate. In Arany's "Wish Battle", Edward, pronounced in the Hungarian way, rhymes at "the Guard", but the English "Edward" is a different word; rhyme must puzzle the English reader and the whole poem goes limping. Similarly, "his cur" "murrays" were pronounced in the Hungarian way, which is not a word, and he picked out "murrays" and "murrays" and mistakes but I shall not say to learn English that acquires Mr Miles' brilliant technical skill. This is a work of love and devotion which deserves our respect. But it is more: it shows that great poetry can be translated into English towards doing it.

## POLITICS

# The background of the Front

By J. R. Vincent

MARTIN WALKER:  
The National Front  
224pp. Fontana/Collins. Paperback, £1.

The National Front is not a joke. It is a great fact, ready and able to share in whatever possibilities English politics may have to offer. Founded in February 1967 by the merger of A. K. Chesterton's League of Empire Loyalists (founded 1964), the British National Party (founded 1960), and part of the Racial Preservation Society, it has emerged from three leadership crises (1970, 1972, 1974-75) and two major secessions (early 1972, 1975) as the dominant nationalist force in England. It is a household word. It had perhaps 20,000 members and £100,000 turnover by 1974. Its vote has not stood still. At the last general election, in October 1974, it polled 113,000 over the whole country; in 1976, at the Leicester local elections, it polled 44,000, averaging 18 per cent of the vote; while this month the NF polled 119,000 votes in London alone. In thirty-one London seats, the NF did better than the Liberal Party. Even in Hampstead the NF had more support than the Communists. But what is the NF? What sort of threat does it represent? The answer is to be found in Martin Walker's *The National Front*, if anywhere.

Mr Walker, who has been Brackenbury Scholar, campaign aide for Edmund Muskie, and is now conspiracy correspondent of *The Guardian*, has been since 1974 the house journalist of the NF, privately welcomed, publicly hanged and threatened, presumably hoping against his liberal better nature that he was on to a scoop. He has read all the printed material put out by the NF and its predecessors, but he has also been enterprising enough to find out what was not in print.

He has probably joined in 1972 over the Ugandan Asians, a trouble by "Nazi" tactics, regards Tyndall as the embodiment of the party and as an electoral liability, and cannot find much to relate to the authentic theory now officially current. It is on the mentality of these new members that everything will turn; and a party which agreed to exclude Tyndall at the start, twice failed to overthrow him by one vote, and once demonstrated only in a limited sense Tyndall's party.

Walker's chapter on NF penetration of the Monday Club is probably meant to show the Conservative right as tainted with the same brush. The point to be made is exactly the reverse. The Conservative right, and effectively crushed NF intrusion upon their (social and geographical) territory. The Conservative right stayed Conservative despite Ugandan Asians in 1972 and apparent national collapse in 1974-75.

Jonathan Guinness purged the Monday Club (1972-74) thereby ridding the NF of a potentially dangerous counter-attraction. Since then, the NF have had little hope in the rich white suburbs, the seaside towns, the slums, or the villages. Mosley was strong in Bexhill-on-Sea; the NF do best in Leicester, a city of prosperous artisans. Eccentric county gentlemen who lent their names to the Empire Loyalists will have nothing to do with a NF which is not in the least nostalgic, traditionalist, or gentlemanlike. Strike-breaking generals can have little interest in a party which came out for the miners in 1974. It is the traditional Labour contributions, not the Conservative hoards, which are at risk. A Conservative collapse may one day benefit the Liberals; there is not the slightest sign of the respectable classes voting for the protest, unless they are not financial support to the NF. The electoral configuration that brought Hitler to power is more appropriate parallel is with the inroads made by the Scottish Nationalists as a protest vote in Labour areas. Since the Liberals do not operate in Labour areas, the NF functions as the alternative to Labour for the city worker. The NF flourishes because voters want an alternative party to vote for; as much as because they want to vote for the NF. In more ways than

one, the NF are the Liberal party of the working classes. NF propaganda stresses the central position of the party between socialism and big business. It stresses its concern for the small man and the pensioner. It deplores the extremism of the two main parties. The NF even advocates that students should play a constructive part in university government. NF literature, as seen by the elector, includes most of the commonplace of Liberal election literature, and some of those used by Labour. If the NF message were extremist, there would be little to fear. It is their capacity to present themselves as moderate which is really alarming. Centrality is a game two can play.

The Tyndall strategy since 1967 has assumed that the Conservatives could not be demoralized or deliberalized, that a Powellite revolution within the Tory Party would not work, that Powellism as a mass movement could not succeed, and that Powell the tactician of parliamentary manoeuvres could not be induced to act as if mass action might succeed.

As for Labour, it was assumed that however much realistic leaders might wish to steal the NF's clothes, the local constituency Labour parties would manage to keep Labour at a suitably wide distance from what is such as to be the safe fate of Mrs Maureen Colquhoun at the hands of her local thought police. Since constituency Labour parties consist increasingly of ultra-liberals left over from the middle-class radicalism of the 1960s, their reaction to a local NF presence is normally to declare a crusade against racism, i.e. to remind people that the intelligentsia prefers to patronize blacks rather than respect working-class sentiment.

In their ten years of existence, the NF have created a non-conservative nationalism with a capable local and national leadership. They have shown themselves able to exploit furries of popular opinion based on publicity (Ugandan Asians, the 1974 election coverage, the 1976 racial tension). They have yet to show whether they can exploit deeper but less sensational questions like unemployment. They have greatly affected the language used by MPs in debate. They have made it impossible to admit coloured refugees without remembering our exclusion of Jewish refugees in the 1930s. They have also made it politically unsafe to expand the present low level of assisted repatriation. They are, in immigrant terms, the force for keeping things as they are.

The one thing they are certainly not to do is to reduce the rapid rise in the black population (31 per cent between mid-1971 and mid-1976). If anything, the nationalists and the immigrant community will be the last to wish to reduce the number of those who come off badly at the hands of those—nationalists and immigration liberals alike—who have raised the spectre of an uncontrolled influx.

Ultimately the chances of the NF are not to do with race. If we have rich and poor, feeling the same need to belong, then we will have parties of rich and poor, leaving the NF out in the cold. If we do not have rich and poor (because everyone has £5,000 a year), then there will be no party of the rich and no party of the poor to mobilize political allegiance; and in a world of poor whites, the party of the poor white mentality should not do badly. Ultimately too, elections are a game where every player wins in the end because of what the other players do and the dominant fact about the NF is that they are now a member of the game. Liberal democracy has nothing to fear but the electorate.

Richard Vaughan, Professor of History at the University of Hull, has collected together documents which mark the history of the various movements towards a greater economic and political union in Europe. His book, *Post-War Integration in Europe* (211pp. Arnold, Paperback, £2.25), which is part of the Documents of Modern History series, contains forty-five items divided chronologically into seven sections each with a short introduction; there is also a short general introduction. The documents include extracts of speeches, conference minutes, the EEC Memorandum (1950), the Treaty of Brussels, and the treaties setting up Nato, the EEC, EFTA and the Warsaw Pact.

The Labour collapse of the late 1960s gave birth to the NF, and transformed elite fascism and elite imperialism into mass nationalism.

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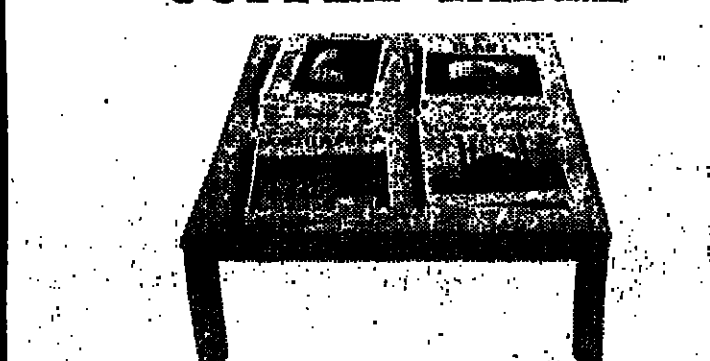
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# Say a dirty word

and get an angry answer. In conventional circles, to speak of 'the inevitability of patriarchy' is like talking gaily of brothels to a Victorian vicar. But if an author can support unfashionable views with it sane and rigorous argument he deserves a hearing. Professor Goldberg certainly does. The argument? All societies everywhere have been patriarchal: positions of power and status are mostly filled by men, and men are expected to predominate in personal relationships. This pattern is founded on physiological facts. Male hormones produce a greater 'dominance tendency', to which societies adapt and which thus becomes institutionalised and amplified. Any society which ignores it will be frustrated and unhappy. In America, where this book was first published, there was the predictable outrage but also powerful and informed support. Margaret Mead called the book 'accurate' and 'persuasive' and David Gutmann wrote in *Commentary* of 'Goldberg's formidable virtues as a scholar and logician... refusing to indulge in any conclusion that cannot be supported by powerful evidence and an airtight deductive chain'. £6.95. To be published 7 July.

## THE INEVITABILITY OF PATRIARCHY by Steven Goldberg

temple smith











# Regularities of the cosmos

By G. E. L. Owen

GREGORY VLASTOS:  
Plato's Universe  
130pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press, £3.75.

Gregory Vlastos's influence on the study of Greek philosophy, notably of the Presocratics and Plato, has been great and admirable. His papers on Plato were collected in 1973, but this is his first book. It is a fine short study, written with the familiar theoretical elegance that marks his forensic style but designed for delivery to an audience composed not wholly or mainly of specialists. Where controversies threaten they are generally relegated to footnotes or appendices.

Professor Vlastos's master-question is: "Did the Greeks really discover what we now mean by science?" His answer is "No, but they discovered the conception of the cosmos that is presupposed by natural science and by its practice". There are three chapters to the book. The first finds new patterns of rationality common to all the earliest *physiologoi*, natural philosophers, from Thales near the beginning of the sixth century BC to Heraclitus near the beginning of the fifth. The other chapters are chiefly analyses of Plato's *Timaeus*, the first tackling the astronomy and the other the analysis of matter.

Inevitably the scope of the work prompts some large conflatations where distinctions would have been welcome. Thus a leading theme of the first chapter is that

Regardless of the extent to which other *physiologoi* might differ from Heraclitus, every single one of them would join him in two affirmations: (1) Solar regularities are either themselves abso-

lutely unbreachable or else any given breach of them will admit of a natural explanation as a special case of some other, still more general, regularity which is itself absolutely unbreachable. (2) What makes the world a cosmos is the existence of such highest-level, absolutely unbreachable regularities.

Elsewhere Professor Vlastos generalizes beyond these solar regularities. He says that, in the view of these Ionian pioneers, such "more massive constancies which constitute the order of nature... If known, would yield the ultimate explanation of every natural phenomenon no matter how unusual and surprising".

A brave claim. Never mind, for now, the shadowiness and incompleteness; the ambiguity and dubious provenance of most of the evidence for these pioneers that Professor Vlastos lumps together. But two sorts of constancy are distinguished. One is that of a continuous or regularly repeated process, such as the solar orbits. Another is represented by that Greek idea of *physis* which Professor Vlastos invokes in this connection: the settled nature of a thing, which makes its behaviour characteristic and so explicable even in circumstances not (or not apparently) showing the first sort of regularity. The Greek gods had acted in character, but there was small regularity in their careers. And when the gods were dislodged by the Ionians, still to explain an eclipse by making the sun a reversible bowl of fire, or thunder and lightning by the characteristics of wind, is not to embody these phenomena in any regular cycle of the first sort.

So the Ionians thought that ultimately each sort of constancy must be invoked to explain the other, that is a pioneer thought that deserves exploring. To be sure, there is one paradigm case: in Heraclitus, the cyclical transformations of fire are governed by Unit

and his character, and the same fire keeps the sun to its "measures". But can the principle have been recognized by the Ionian *physiologoi* in that wholly form for which Professor Vlastos contends?

The chapter on the astronomy of the *Timaeus* explores a familiar paradox. Plato rejected the naturalistic cosmos invented by the Ionians for an improved version, based in "theology and speculative metaphysics". Yet this same theology, with its emphasis on what was best and most beautiful, helped him to a theory of regular spiral paths for some heavenly bodies which, so far as it went, adumbrated the canonical astronomy of Ptolemy. Indeed its account of the sun's path "would have been of special interest to the working astronomer, because it generated a multitude of

inferences concerning the sun's expected behaviour—inferences which could be used to institute new observations that might confirm or disconfirm the theory". This suggestion that some early thinkers were systematically concerned with "confirmation and disconfirmation" is echoed many times in the book. Thus two fifth-century figures who remarked the unequal periods of the solstices helped to bootstrap astronomy to Plato in the form of "scientifically ascertained facts"; and for these Professor Vlastos's criteria are that, first, "they are established by observation or by inference from it"; second, "they provide answers to questions posed by theory"; third, "they are the common property of qualified investigators who are aware of possible sources of observational error and are in a position to repeat or vary the observation to eliminate or

reduce suspected error". And here, on pinheads of evidence.

By contrast with astronomic theories of terrestrial physics, "safe from refutation by experiment and for that very reason immune of confirmation from it". It is this point that Professor Vlastos claims that the *Timaeus* is the story, "doubtless to be preferred, others only, at best, on some grounds. But Plato's 'likely story' is meant equally to cover the anomaly and cannot be a special defence of the fabulous astronomy if there were reasons for the successors to prefer Democritean atomism to that of the *Timaeus*, reasons independent of theory-like observation or those postulated by certain investigators, those reasons would be, as they are, in examination-papers, compacts and contraband.

A fine, brave book, then, the argument leavened with delectable

## The system of sympathy

By Duncan Forbes

ADAM SMITH:  
The Theory of Moral Sentiments  
Edited by D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie  
412pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford  
University Press, £15.

This is the first volume of the Glasgow edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith. The copy text is that of the sixth edition of 1790, which was revised and considerably expanded by Smith. It has been collated with the other editions published in Smith's lifetime, and with the posthumous seventh edition. The major variants are given in footnotes (since some of these are fairly long and important one must regret the smallness of the print), the minor variants appear in Appendix I. Everything bibliographically relevant is presented and sorted according to the most exacting standards; the editors could not have been better chosen; they have had the assistance of other experts, including that of the late Walther Eckstein, whose great German edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, now fifty years old and well known to all Smith scholars, has been used and corrected where necessary. The editorial footnotes are helpful and unobtrusive, though very occasionally perhaps unnecessary, as in the identification of Gustavus Adolphus. Smith's citations are identified (they are not always reliable, but this is put right); echoes from other writings are usefully picked up; and suggestions are put forward. Some remarks may be slightly dubious about the suggested relation of Smith's remarks on the love of one's country and the "man of system" in politics to the outbreak of the French Revolution—the time scale seems rather tight. And the correction to the introduction of Beckstein's suggestion about Smith's later "Tory" conservatism, as seen in these remarks is right so far as it goes but does not take one very far.

The colossal proximity of the *Wealth of Nations* has tended to throw *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* into the shadows, though the earlier, first published in 1759, raised a chorus of praise in eighteenth-century Europe, which nevertheless, as reported by the editors, leaves one with the impression that the book was not very well understood. It seems to have been only in this century that the seriousness of Smith's ethical theory has been properly appreciated, a theme in which the editors do not seem to be particularly interested, perhaps this appreciation is due to so much of social psychology rather than ethics. For Wexlermark, for example, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* was the "most important contribution to moral psychology made by any British thinker".

The editors, D. D. Raphael and A. L. Macfie, are wisely, keep their eye on the ball of eighteenth-century ethics. Their introduction, as one would expect, especially in the case of a book in its infancy, is misleading and, in places, rather too exclusively in terms of the feelings as they have been done since, were they not to think

of Smith's ultimate intention, this sort of way? To put Smith squarely in the Stoic, as opposed to Epicurean, is as misleading and narrow as to do the same of Kant. Both, with their strong sense of historical relationship, were in different ways trying to arrive at a sort of workable *via media* between the two. The historical relation is seen in Smith, for example, who describes Stoicism, and he is merely thinking of their teaching in immediate context, as a "dead song", suited to a dangerous sort of society in which death was meant death or slavery for every body. The editors do not dwell on this placing of Stoicism firmly in the historical context of Antiquity. (A note between the titles of Ferguson and Smith, beginning at this point and widening out, would throw into clear relief the differences between the two very different kinds of "Stoicism".) But it is a pity that Smith describes his picture of Stoicism as a "dressed out in all the grandeur, pomp and pomp that becomes that magnificent declension".

One may suggest that Smith's allusions to Stoicism were part of a simple screen, along with his appeals to natural religion? The editors would have none of this. They have no doubt that whatever the nature of Smith's natural religion was, it was sincere. (Appendix 2, which has already been published, dealing with the famous "atonement passage" in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* as its modification and eventual removal, is an important contribution to the question of where Smith stood on religion.) And yet one has a sinking feeling that Smith was more humane than appears on the surface. It is not something one can prove, and it takes one to the realm of the hunch, but more one stresses the Stoic's love, as the crucial thing in Smith's ethical theory, the more likely it is to miss or play down its genuine originality, as well as the *Pragmatism* of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* when that is in conjunction with the *Wealth of Nations*.

But all this is highly debatable. At least we now have the edition to help the debate, and at the same time inciting a healthy impatience with what awaits the remaining volumes.

Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, Book 1, appeared in a new edition with an introduction and commentary by Adrian S. 171pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, £5. It advises young men how to win their girl. No previous edition. It is a Latin text, followed by Bishop, Theodor, Orleans and applied to the life. *The Ars Amatoria*, with its companion piece *Amoris*, was the last of Ovid's poems, and quickly became a best-seller. It was the time of his banishment, already being used against him more recent times, although scholars, like St. Dunstan, are to have been attached to it, and avoidance has led to its acquisition of a misleading reputation, and the feelings as they have been done since, were they not to think

## Urns into chamber pots

By Peter Gay

THOMAS SZASZ:  
Karl Kraus and the Soul-Doctors  
180pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul, £6.95.

Thomas Szasz's latest lunge at Freud is, though mercifully brief, two books in one. The second, mainly in Karl Kraus's words, is a perceptive but brilliant, the first, mainly in Dr Szasz's words, is a polemic and depressing. It seemed a good idea to present some of Karl Kraus's scorching prose (too little known, Dr Szasz rightly says, to the English-speaking world) in translation, but, compressed into a small compass, Kraus's pronouncements on psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and what Dr Szasz is pleased to call Freud's "unworthy followers", seem vicious far more than witty.

It would be unfortunate if Karl Kraus should come to be known to those who have no German primarily by these aphorisms and little essays, crippled as they are by sheer rage and a determined unwillingness to inform himself before he uttered another blast. Like many other more or less casual readers of Kraus, I know, of course, that he has labelled psychoanalysis as the disease he professed to cure; it was a thought that occurred to him, as this anthology shows (dare I say?) obsessively.

Kraus (Dr Szasz tells his readers) felt that a civilized person's first obligation was just that—being civil. To him this meant that such a person had an inalienable obligation to practice the ethic of respect, not only towards persons but towards crafts and traditions as well.

It is an attractive declaration of intent: here is how Kraus practised it. Psychoanalysis is the disease of manipulated Jews; the religious ones are satisfied with "diabetes". That much for being civil. "I understand that psychoanalysis is a big hit in the United States. It figures: the Americans love everything they haven't got, especially antiquities and the soul." That much for the ethic of respect. "Psychoanalysis is an occupation in whose very name 'psyche' and 'anus' are united." That much for respecting crafts.

It is not that psychoanalysis

should be beyond criticism; especially in its early years it was so defensive, and so humourless, that jokes at its expense, especially good jokes, would have been salutary. But Kraus packs so much fury into his polished sayings, that his criticisms—I should say, attempts at demolition—misfire and only raise more than once, and his writings bear him out, that he was not a pan-sexualist, yet Karl Kraus thinks he has made a telling point when he writes, "Psychoanalysis is the occupation of lewd and lascivious persons who attribute everything in the world, except what they themselves do, to repressed sexuality". Again, though Freud was principally a scientist and only secondarily a physician, he took great pleasure in seeing his patients improve under his care; yet Kraus finds it necessary to say, "Most people are sick, but only the psychoanalysts regard this as something to be proud of."

While Kraus likes to accuse the psychoanalysts of a degrading preoccupation with dirt, he himself is deeply preoccupied with filth: "If mankind, with all its repulsive faults, is an organism, then the psychoanalyst is its excrement." I will forbear psychoanalysing this kind of resentment and only suggest that there is a measure of perversity in it; far more than would appear from Dr Szasz's pages, Freud and Kraus had much in common, notably their opposition to treating homosexuality as a crime, their pessimism, their scepticism towards universal philanthropy, and their mastery of literary German. Dr Szasz has all of Kraus's vehemence, none of Kraus's gift for aphorism. He scores a few points along the way, he rescues Kraus, at least partially, from the charge of having been a Jewish anti-semitic; he corrects, though with unwarranted vituperativeness, the account of Kraus's relations with psychoanalysis in such standard

treatments as Ernest Jones's biography of Freud. But his commentary is such a travesty that to quote it is to refute it. In what is evidently Dr Szasz's favourite passage from his favourite author, Karl Kraus once took credit for having pointed out "the distinction between an urn and a chamber pot", a distinction which, in clarifying the use of language, helped to humanize humanity. "The others, those who fail to make this distinction, are divided into those who use the urn as chamber pot and those who use the chamber pot as urn." Dr Szasz's gloss on this well-known statement is a swipe at Freud:

Typically, the psychoanalyst insists that the urns of those he dislikes are really chamber pots, and that the chamber pots of those he likes are really urns; since his hatreds far outweigh his loves, he tends to change the urns into chamber pots. In

Freud's hands, Oedipus is thus transformed from legendary king into psychoanalytic complex, and Leonardo from gentle genius into homosexual pervert. With commentary on this level, we can hardly be surprised to hear from Dr Szasz that Freud "destroyed" his unhappy disciple Victor Tausk, that Freud's later disapproval of Kraus testifies to his "overweening selfishness and vanity", that while "Kraus was a consistent individualist and what we would now call, 'antifascist'", Freud was "a collectivist and totalitarian"—which, I take it, makes Freud into a fascist. Dr Szasz does not use this episode, but repeats the story of the aged Freud inscribing one of his books for Mussolini, deifying taking the incident from Jones's biography (and footnoting the fact) without recounting the context for this inauspicious episode, related by Jones on the same page. This sort of stuff, and much else, compels one to deny Szasz the status he assigned to Karl Kraus, noble rhetorician, and relegate him to the status he assigned Sigmund Freud: base rhetorician.

## Corruption at the core

By George Steiner

HARRY ZOHN (Editor):  
In These Great Times  
A Karl Kraus Reader  
Translations by Joseph Fabry, Max Knight, Karl F. Ross and Harry Zohn  
263pp. Montreal: Engendra, £12.25.

HARRY ZOHN (Editor and Translator):  
Half-Truths & One-and-a-Half Truths  
Karl Kraus: Selected Aphorisms  
128pp. Montreal: Engendra, £5.95.

There are three main difficulties in translating Karl Kraus into English. Kraus saw in linguistic purity the necessary and almost sufficient condition of the health of society. He poured inexhaustible fury and sarcasm on those who mutilated the language, and he was particularly angry at the German language, on journalists and academic pedants, on bureaucrats and purveyors of kitsch. His own prose can be of lapidary brilliance and staccato. But it is itself idiosyncratic and not always innocent of the vices which it excoriates in others. Second, the entire dense fabric of Karl Kraus's writings is

local. It feeds on the gossip, *faits divers*, locations, urban politics, literary and political quarrels, humour of the Vienna of Kraus's day. No writer of comparable stature has ever been more deliberately rooted in and circumscribed by local terrain. If Kraus made of the Viennese press the object of incessant minute exegesis and polemic commentary, it was because he saw in that press the corrupt core of reality. Short of international footnotes and glossaries, the idiom of echo within which Kraus operates will not export.

The third difficulty is related. Though there are plenty of analogies between the decaying world of the Habsburg dual monarchy and contemporary Britain—Vienna was, in striking ways, the London of the 1960s and early 1970s—no currently available British format resembles Kraus's sole periodical *Die Fackel* (one need only glance at the rancorous venom of *Private Eye* to grasp the difference), and no niche in British public discourse, if at all like a shaped and filled by Kraus's lyrical, erudite, historicist barrage. The nearest stance to it would be the unlikely amalgam of P. R. Leavis with H. L. Menckin.

There is therefore a very real case for saying that Karl Kraus ought not to be translated. Those

who grapple with the great theme of the relations between language and political crisis, those who concern themselves with the tortured genius and destruction of European Judaism, or those who try to get Kraus, and there is a marked "poetic" truth in his achievements as publicist and translator. But outside its prose context, the poetry stays naked.

*Half-Truths & One-and-a-Half Truths* is a selection of aphorisms. The form is important in itself. It connects the idiom of Kraus to that of Lichtenberg and Nietzsche on the one hand, and to that of Wittgenstein and of Adorno's *Minima Moralia* on the other. Many of Kraus's dicta, moreover, are pungent or murderous or both in themselves. I no longer have collaborators. I used to be envious of their. They repeat those words whom I want to lose myself.

"Moral responsibility is what is lacking in a man when he demands it of a woman." "Contemporaries live from second hand to mouth." Or, the marvelous summation: "Life is an effort that deserves a better cause." Professor Zohn has gathered a rich, bitter harvest.

Could these two volumes start a Kraus revival or, at least, bring Kraus's fierce achievement to wider notice? Kraus himself would be the first to doubt it. "From torch something drops occasionally. A little lump of pitch."

## The Athlone Press UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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## Yale University Press May books

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This imaginative survey of British commemorative sculpture between 1780 and 1840 gives this important period the attention it deserves. Penny combines the history of art with the religious, literary, and social history of the time, thus giving us new insights into art and life in the age of Romanticism. £10.00. Published by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

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This first comprehensive survey of responses to Goya's work includes critical reactions ranging from 18th-century Spanish bishops to 19th-century French poets to 20th-century American filmmakers and Czechoslovakian novelists. It throws new light on the personal stance of many artists and on the changing aesthetic criteria of different periods. £15.50.

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Stanley Tarrow

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### The Bonds of Womanhood "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835

Nancy F. Cott

Based on women's unpublished diaries and letters, organizational records, and works written about or addressed to women of the time, this study investigates the circumstances and the consciousness of middle-class women as they ordinarily lived, worked and thought, while also examining ideas about "woman's place". £9.00.

### Speaking Out for America's Children

Milton J. Senn

America is often thought of as a child-oriented society, but this book debunks the myth by documenting the poverty of the American commitment to the welfare of its children. 1975 (cloth), £3.60 (paper).

### "Doctors Wanted: No Women Need Apply"

Sexual Barriers in the Medical Profession, 1835-1975

Mary Roth Walsh

Using largely unexplored primary material, the author shows that the all-male American medical establishment has made a conscious effort to limit the number of women physicians. From both psychological and economic motives men tried to deny equal access to medical careers. £10.80.

### The Bonds of Womanhood "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835

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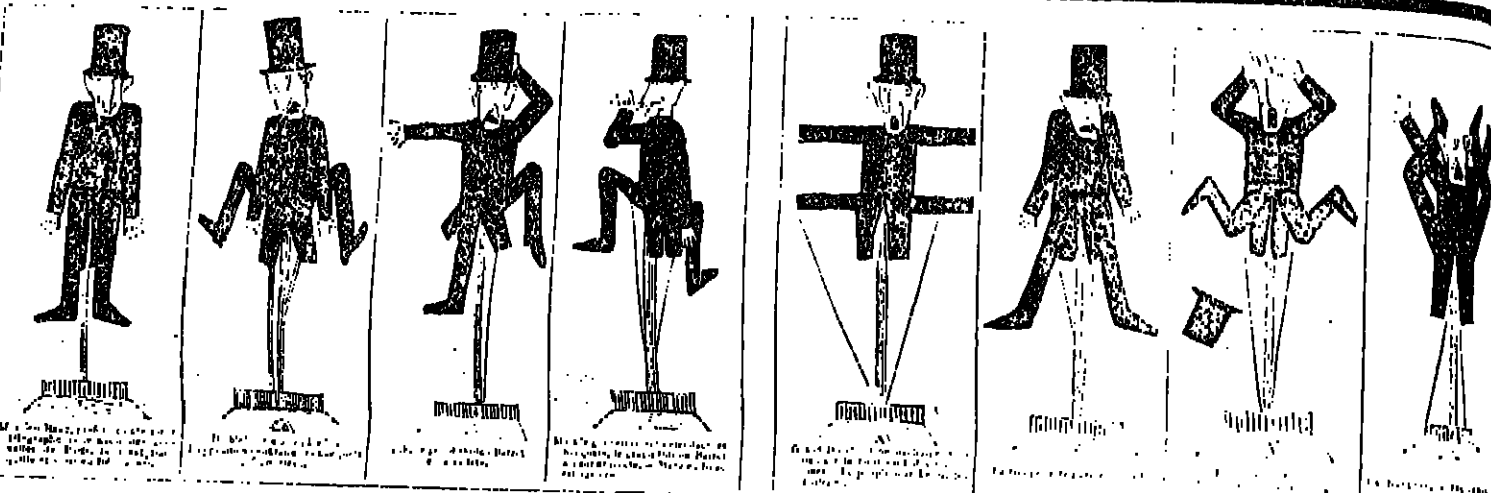
20 Bloomsbury Square,  
London W.C.1.







# TLS Commentary



## Landscape, with poets

For those addicted to literary quizzes, there is a treble taxing parlour-game on BBC2 next Tuesday evening, an unofficial by-product of Edward Mirzoeff's film *The Queen's Realm*. This fifty-five-minute "aerial anthology" is a scapes filmed from a helicopter, with no commentary but a non-stop accompaniment of English poetry and English music. For the patriots who will be able to identify all the poets, count Benjamin on the helicopter, reads the extracts from his own poems, and provides a few linking passages; the rest is read by actors. Generally pictures dominate words, but the sweeping remoteness of the spoken word into the foreground. The opening shots of the white cliffs of Dover, to the inevitable accompaniment of "This precious stone set in the silver sea" etc, are dazzling, and set the tone.

For England appears to be a pretty dazzling place altogether in this film, informed foreigners never imagine that in England it never rains, that turning windmills and watermills were still the norm, and that Morris dancers habitually entertain villages on the "echoing green" whenever it was not in use for cricket matches or village fêtes. This is purely because there are strict regulations about flying helicopters over cities: London is coped with by flying along the Thames, and much is made of riverside power stations, to the accompaniment of rather too much of Beethoven's Newgate poem on the nature of electricity. What Benjamin calls "the unregarded Midlands" remain relatively unregarded, though pollution, traffic, and the tyranny of the motor car, are properly noticed.

The north of England comes off best—Hadrian's Wall, the Pennines, and the Dales, filmed in autumn with shifting shadows and grand cloud formations. Here as elsewhere, in such a patchwork of sensation, it is the lines of poetry that stand out, illuminating the character of what one sees. Auden's "Examine this region of short distances and definite places" from "In Praise of Limestone", and "Wordsworth's 'Perfect content and morn, misty entire' from "The Recluse". The film is arranged to span the seasons from one spring to the next, ending with Larkin's painfully good poem "The Trees" about the grief implicit in spring's demanding voice: "Begin afresh, afresh, afresh."

As it happens, Edward Mirzoeff did anything but begin afresh in the making of *The Queen's Realm*. The only anachronism is a shot of "LNER" Scotsman speeding north. The film was however entirely made in the cutting-room from material shot for the two series *Bird's Eye View* and *Landscapes of England*; some sequences have already been seen. The film is a pleasure to the eye and ear, it is nostalgic, romantic and reassuring—just what we do not need, some might say, but it makes a nice change. No prizes are offered unfortunately for identifying poets, composers, or places, but Mr. Mirzoeff will send a list to any frustrated viewers who write to him.

Someone else who has been looking at England for BBC2 is J. B.

"Nouvelles télégraphiques"—an episode in the resistible rise to political power of Massieu Reue, the supreme time-server, *Almaïre Reue*, was the creation of Félix Tournachon, better known as the great photographer Nadar, and fifty-one episodes from his unpublished successful career in defence of the established order appeared in the satirical weekly *La Revue comique* a *Voyage de la* *Satire* (which was closed by the censors in December 1849). This radical strip cartoon has just been reprinted as *Vie publique* *privée* de Massieu Reue, *Pierre (Nap)*, 1851 with a short face by François Caradec.

## East of Lilliput

Anyone glancing casually at monograph No 4 in the "Moonlight" series, published by Amherst College, Doshisha University, Kyoto—the editor of the series Ots Cary tells us that its aim is to contribute "towards breaking new paths in old fields"—might be forgiven for suspecting an elaborate scholarly hoax: *Gulliver's Travels* and *Japan: A New Reading*, by Maurice Johnson, Kinokuniya, Munro, Japan? But then one remembers that in the most unmemorable chapter of the most unmemorable book, Gulliver does visit Japan, fleetingly. We don't remember Japan, because Swift is so good at scoring off the Dutch. When Gulliver, posing as a Dutchman, asks to be excused the obligatory reverence of "trampling upon the *Cin*" the emperor is surprised at this reserve and is moved to reflect that Gulliver might be a Christian rather than a "real Hollander". Still, the voyage to Japan is the only voyage Gulliver makes in the book. Swift must have had some source for his names and customs, and it must make some sense to ask what they are.

For Professors Johnson, Munro, and Williams the three forgettable Japanese pages at the end of the third book become something of a controlling presence. *Gulliver's Travels*, and the sources leave trails all over the place. In their general enthusiasm they do seem to have established

## Fifty years on...

In the TLS of May 26, 1927 Herbert Read wrote about Laurence Sterne. A Sentimental Journey had recently been allocated 75th place in the *Everyman's Library*; and at the same time the first complete edition of his works was published in England (there had been an earlier American one).

Disaffection with the "digestive" spirit of Sterne's works arises from a misunderstanding of the methods of proper to humorous writing. The conception of plot, which we have continually in mind owing to our preoccupation with drama and fiction, has nothing to do with the question. It is indeed, as Lockie, again Sterne is indebted to Locke, a contemporary German critic, Rudolf Kasper, has suggested that from the moment when Mr. Shandy was so unhelpfully interrupted in his first chapter of *Tristram* by his clock, there is an absolute play upon Locke's theory of Duration. Sterne certainly seems to have taken his cue from this part of the *Essay* concerning *Human Understanding* (Book II, ch. 10), but the real basis of his method is profounder. To quote Colledge again:

H. M. DALESKI:  
Joseph Conrad  
The Way of Dispossession  
234pp. Faber and Faber, £5.95.  
NORMAN SHERRY (Editor):  
Joseph Conrad  
A Commemorative  
224pp. Macmillan, £7.95.

The slightly staid atmosphere of present-day Conrad studies appears to be due to two causes. One is the inevitable element of inaccessibility in a reputation that has been academically established for so long (the *ad hoc* *diabolus* has played little part in the history of Conrad criticism). The other is to be found in Conrad's work, which, because of its obscurities, lends itself to symbolising and to what Conrad's biographer Jocelyn Linnekin calls "alchemical criticism". H. M. Daleski's book does a good deal to dispel this fog, and it is to be commended also for the forthright way in which he commits himself on the vexed question of what are Conrad's best books, or, as he puts it, "the works that constitute Conrad's right to be regarded as one of the greatest English novelists of the twentieth century".

According to Professor Daleski these are *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897), *Heart of Darkness* (1899), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Typhoon* (1901), *Nostramo* (1904), *The Secret Agent* (1907), *The Secret Sharer* (1909), and *Under Western Eyes* (1910). Daleski agrees with Thomas Munro in seeing Conrad's distinctive weakness as a writer revealed in his treatment of sexual love, in which he concentrated more than in any other of Conrad's books. In other words, Daleski's book must be judged to be a favourable specimen of a rather dubious kind, the expository treatise. I myself found more virtue in his occasional sharp analyses and judgements. But about the successful work there must also be reservations, since *Nigger* produced no single unquestionable masterpiece. His many virtues as a writer are most effectively displayed in three separate novels (*Nostramo*, *The Secret Agent*, and *Under Western Eyes*).

Daleski organizes his book, and his thought about Conrad, around what he calls the theme of "self-possession". I was reminded, in reading him, of what Housman thought "the most important truth which has ever been uttered, and the greatest discovery ever made in the moral world". This is the saying, "whoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life shall find it". Daleski's view of Conrad might be summed up by saying that he sees him as complete mastery to D. H. Lawrence. That Daleski has also written (illegibly) in exploring and realizing this truth in his own, non-sexual terms. It seems right to see Conrad's essential subject as the moral and psychological problems of insecure men under extreme stress, a subject which in his best work he succeeded in investing with an

# The surrender of the self

By W. W. Robson

with the plain reader of that novel. He was such a reader as in the position of Captain Mitchell's audience, "stunned and as it were annihilated mentally by a sudden surfeit of sights, sounds, names, facts, and complicated information imperfectly apprehended". He does some helpful work in advising us on how to cope with the dedicated chronology which makes *Nostramo* so difficult to read. And he is not sparing in his criticisms of faults in the novel, such as Conrad's resort to stock characterizations in the depiction of Hirsch: "we are not to query Hirsch's somewhat improbable behaviour because he is, after all, a Jew, and his cowardice therefore self-explanatory". But his main achievement falls on the positive achievements of this book, and he finds an excellent embodiment of his leading idea about Conrad in the impressively drawn character of Dr. Monygham, who alone, through his self-effacement, "establishes the profit of loss".

The *Secret Agent* Daleski judges—surely rightly—as the best of Conrad's novels. The influence of Dickens here is not merely stylistic, but appears in the framework of the unifying plot and the analogies that are established by the recurrence of poetic images. For Daleski, *The Secret Agent* is essentially the story of Winnie and Stevie, and this means that he has to pass over some other fine things in the novel that are not relevant to his thesis. But he does so as it seems to me an interesting judgment, that it is one of the four English novels which envision the disintegration of the society that in fact collapsed in 1914 (the others are *Ulysses*, *War and Peace*, and *Anna Karenina*). I am not myself so clear that British society did "collapse" in 1914, but Daleski's argument is stimulating, and readers will profit from it.

I also found much of interest in the discussion of "The Secret Sharer", especially the study of Conrad's modifications of the real life story, and the claim for *Heart of Darkness* as Conrad's greatest work. But the effect of reading so many pages of level-paced analysis and paraphrase is a little numbing. I found myself wishing that Daleski's best insights could have been distilled into a single, clear, and concise statement of his thesis. Some of the index entries suggest what it could have been like: see for instance the headings of "abandon", "darkness", "point of view", "panic", "the test", "time-shifts", "Laurance was more attractive because Daleski is there expounding non-fictional texts which only the out-and-out Laurencian is likely to read, and showing their relationship with the texts that are widely read. The book is a good one, and on the whole, the reader is often made to traverse rather familiar ground.

How far does it contribute to a radical re-evaluation of Conrad? The voice of Menckshoeke is rarely heard in this book. But some of Daleski's incidental remarks do arouse disturbing thoughts. One example is this verdict on *Nostramo*: "It must be seen as Conrad's most complex achievement... but... in some essentially limiting way a cold work... We are kept at such a distance from the characters and see them in so remorselessly cold and intellectual a light that, while everything is plausible, there is little that has the warmth, the crucial emotional force, of the greatest art." (In this respect *Nostramo* compares unfavourably with *Lord Jim* and *Under Western Eyes*). I cannot help feeling that the place of *Nostramo* in the canon needs even more radical questioning than this, and that Daleski could have said more than he does about the astonishing inequalities of the writings.

Otherwise the proposed wedding of Conrad and Freud has a lot to be said for it. I am sure that the *Psychology of Conrad* is correct; they belong to the sunset of Conrad. (I do not understand why F. R. Leavis includes them in his *Great Tradition* of English literature, but Conrad's claim to supreme greatness is based, while, on the *Nigger of the 'Narcissus'*).

## The Early Life of James McBey

An Autobiography, 1883-1911

Edited with an epilogue by Nicolas Barker

This remarkable memoir covers the first twenty-eight years of the life of this self-taught Scottish artist and has long unpublished since his death in 1959. The illegitimate son of the daughter of a village blacksmith, McBey taught himself etching and became one of the finest British etchers of the twentieth century, as well as a painter in water-colours and oils. The memoir is a vivid, affecting description of a period and place. Illustrated £5.50

## Two Theories of Morality

Stuart Hampshire

In this expanded version of his three Thank-Offering to Britain lectures given in 1976, Stuart Hampshire deals with two radically different conceptions of morality: those of Aristotle and Spinoza. He discusses the relationship between ordinary moral institutions and moral theory, and emphasizes that moral philosophy ought to lead to moral conversion in the individual. Spinoza's theory of the relation between mind and body is expounded and the importance of recent developments in psychology for an understanding of free will and morality is considered. £3

## The Nature of Morality

An Introduction to Ethics

Gilbert Harman

This book contains an overall account of morality in its philosophical format, particularly with regard to problems of observation, evidence, and truth. While focusing on observational evidence and on the apparent immunity of morality from it, the author avoids purely technical questions that have no bearing on the main problem. £4.25 paper covers £2.50 OPUS

## America: The Story of a Free People

Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager

This new edition of a well-known short history of the United States brings the story up to the accession of Gerald Ford to the Presidency. It covers the Vietnam War and foreign policy in general, the Civil Rights movement, the two Nixon election campaigns, and Watergate. Fourth edition paper covers £2.25

## Invitation to Go

John Fairbairn

Go is a territorial board game which originated four thousand years ago in China (where it is known as Wei Chi). Today there are some ten million players in Japan and a hundred thousand in the West. The rules are very simple, but the strategy can be as complicated as you like. This book is a basic, step-by-step introduction to the game, written by a Western player for Western players. £2.60 paper covers £1.30

## Oxford University Press

## June 23 RONALD FIRBANK: MEMOIRS & CRITIQUES

edited by MERVYN HORDER  
Ronald Firbank, the half-Irish Catholic alcoholic homosexual novelist, led a life of eggregious disorder; and the fortunes of his work and reputation since his death have been nearly as confused as his life. This book brings together the many papers which his critics and admirers need to build up their picture of this elusive dragonfly.

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The Old Piano Factory, 43 Gloucester Crescent, London NW1 01-495-3484



that Conrad had much in common with the German writer. Zdzisław Najder brings out Conrad's unfavourable view of Rousseau and draws a useful distinction between one kind of "confession" (the Rousseau-like apology, and another, the kind that admits sin; both play a part in Conrad's greatest fiction. Biographical contributions are provided by Ugo Mursi, who locates what he believes to be Conrad's true birthplace (Ivanovka), and by Frederick C. Karl in an examination of Conrad's long correspondence with his long-suffering literary agent Pinker.

Two essays deal with Ford (or Huftler), closely associated with Conrad during what Daleski and other critics think Conrad's greatest creative period. Thomas Moser examines Conrad's probable influence on *The Good Soldier*, which (surely with some exaggeration) he calls a "great work", and Ivo Vidan offers a scholarly account of Ford's interpretation of Conrad's artistic technique. Two contributions on the Polish aspect of Conrad are of unequal value. There seems little in Barbara Kocówna's brief essay on "The Problem of Language"; but Adam Gillon provides a very useful survey of Conrad's reception in Poland for the past sixty years. The trouble is that one could almost predict the substance of this article without knowing any of the facts. It is no surprise to learn that Conrad's reputation has fluctuated in accordance with the political situation in the country; sometimes the

critics have blamed him for leaving Poland, and sometimes not. At any rate, it is reassuring to hear that he now enjoys renown among his countrymen and that admiration for him is in order. And Adam Gillon makes the most interesting single statement in the book when he tells us that "the initial impact of Conrad's work (in Poland) was that of a Polish Jack London".

These two books then, taken together, suggest something of the activity and variety of modern studies in Conrad. They do not altogether remove misgivings about the present value of his work, with its many obscurities and inequalities, and the uncertainties over what is truly classical in it. In the current state of criticism it is unlikely that these difficulties will be satisfactorily resolved. A remark of M. C. Bradbrook, in an essay in the Sherry volume, sounds an ominous note. She is discussing the relation between *Victory* and *Malincolini*. Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, and in the course of her discussion she remarks that "in spite of the fact that *Victory* is not a 'good' novel [it] may offer in modern readers' eyes a more powerful machine that works". My worry over this essay is not the suggestion that Lowry is an artist of similar order to Conrad, though I admit I prefer the substance of this article without knowing any of the facts. It is no surprise to learn that Conrad's reputation has fluctuated in accordance with the political situation in the country; sometimes the

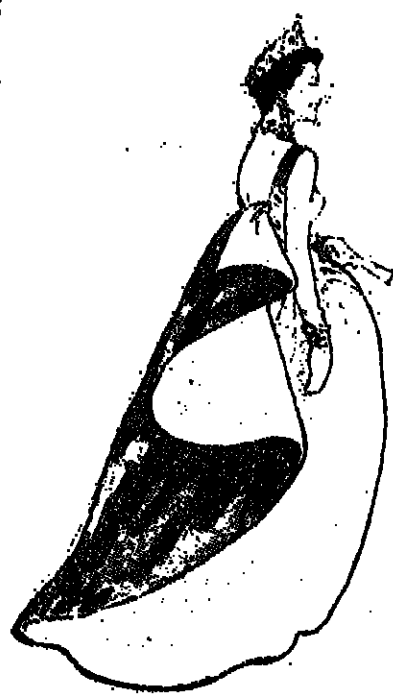
## The sympathetic look

By Stella Mary Newton

ROBB AND ANNE EDWARDS:  
The Queen's Clothes  
127pp. Express Books/Elm Tree Books, £5.95.

Jubilee celebration books are fun now; they will be terribly boring in five years' time and fascinating in fifty. This particular one, *The Queen's Clothes*, will, it is safe to predict, not only be fascinating in fifty years' time but, because it can be presumed that most copies will have perished by then, valuable in monetary terms, too. The few copies sold now, of course, the more valuable then, but this is no way to assess such an immediately accessible book made for such a happy occasion—though it is perhaps not unfair to advise those who buy it to retain its cheerful dust-cover, keep its silver book-band clean and uncrumpled and put the whole thing in acid-free paper out of the way of the children, not forgetting to leave it to a favourite one in the will.

As a carefully compiled record of what the present Queen was first given to wear and later chose for herself this will be an important source book for future historians. Because at least half the illustrations consist of photographs of the Queen on different occasions of the great many different kinds, both in England and abroad, attempts to identify the other people on the spot will be an added interest—sensibly, the author of the text has a rule though it is unnecessary to name them. Of setting these photographs, however, the excellent colour photographs of the Queen on different occasions of the great many different kinds, both in England and abroad, attempts to identify the other people on the spot will be an added interest—sensibly, the author of the text has a rule though it is unnecessary to name them. Of setting these photographs, however, the excellent colour photographs of the Queen on different occasions of the great many different kinds, both in England and abroad, attempts to identify the other people on the spot will be an added interest—sensibly, the author of the text has a rule though it is unnecessary to name them.



A drawing by Robb of a dress in white satin and emerald, worn by the Queen in India: from *The Queen's Clothes*.

ferred those who wore his hats in show a minimum of or, better, no hair, which made his hat look good and their wearers somehow formidable. In her text Anne Edwards says that the Queen is not intelligent but that she is interested in clothes—on an Englishman's logic, which might question—but with a certain justice to the magnificent evening dresses whose embroideries, he so Queen is determined not to look much enjoy.

himself, whose drawings of the Queen wearing them reveal a kind of truth beyond the camera's reach.

For a considerable time after she came to the throne the Queen's hats were designed by the brilliant Danish milliner, Anne Thorup, who would cut a hat out of the Persian carpet on the floor or build one out of a handful of wool-shavings (though not, of course, for the Queen). Anne Thorup (phonetically in English Orger Torup) pre-

intimidating; in other words she would rather look sympathetic than chic (a word for which, appropriately, there is no English equivalent).

Like Robb, Anne Edwards views the Queen's clothes subjectively. She prefers the later crisp kind of the draping New Look variety of the 1950s, but she does not completely sustain her case that the latter are nearer to the current fashion than the former. Like Robb too, Anne Edwards, the book's publishers, she writes in the informal idiom of contemporary fashion journalism, another ingredient which, because it will add to the book's future historical importance, she calls all the Queen's suits of clothing "fits", for example, and at one point refers to Her Majesty as a "natural for the job", a metaphor which the first Queen Elizabeth might have given a different interpretation from today's.

Today's readers will be interested in her discussion of the difficulties such public clothes as the Queen's have to face. Sleeves and scarves must not be liable to get caught in the balustrades, skirts must not blow up and must be able to arrange themselves becomingly and without help when the wearer sits down; hats, whatever the circumstances, must not only reveal the face, but every possible angle but must also stay on the head.

What is actually missing from the Queen's clothes from any period in her reign is the ingenious and delightful detail which only a second hand discoverer, a quality which the French know how to incorporate even in their simplest designs. But then, after all, the great majority of people do not get a second look at the Queen. Almost the most engaging illustration in the book is a small drawing by Robb of Sir Noel and Lady Noel standing respectfully and dignified as the Queen, her back half-turned to us, considers some drawings of dresses he has submitted for her approval. Robb's illustration, of course, of subtle differences of expression; they do not flatter, but they illuminate her character, and he certainly does justice to the magnificent evening dresses whose embroideries, he so Queen is determined not to look much enjoy.

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And Larigue's pictures fly.

## Hardbacks and Paperbacks

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# To the Editor

## Inoculation

Sir—Apropos of J. F. Watkins's review, "Preventing the Fox" (May 6): as a matter of fact, the Oriental practice of inoculation against smallpox was not "introduced into England by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in 1717, or thereabouts". In 1714 Timonius published an account which he sent to the Royal Society; see also *Philosophical Transactions*, Volume XXIX—though Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (and here we overlook the pioneer work of Cotton and Ingresse Mather and Zabdel Boylston in New England) may have furthered the inoculation cause in England among those who knew of and cared for her letters before their publication in 1763.

Bracknell College, Church Road, Bracknell, Berkshire.

## Pavel Filonov

Sir—Myth and misinformation have long surrounded the career of the great modern Russian painter Pavel Filonov, and they are unfortunately perpetuated by Igor Vinogradoff in the course of his long review of books on Russian art (May 6) when he writes that Filonov "died of starvation, in 1942, and has been refused burial cards during the siege of Leningrad, because of nonconformity". All these statements are wrong. Filonov (who died decades ago, he trained himself, as part of a deliberate regime of asceticism, to live on no more than bread and tea) died of pneumonia contracted during his work as voluntary firewatcher during the siege. Though it can hardly be claimed he has received his just measure of recognition, his work has in fact been exhibited many times (at any rate one painting of his is on display in a Soviet gallery). He indeed deserves to be better known in the West—the more so since several "pseudo-Filonovs" have regrettably been sold under his name in London salerooms recently.

Another point in Mr Vinogradoff's interesting article is a discussion of the "unorthodox" artists, operating outside the Soviet institutional framework for arts, he claims they "are breaking

the law if they sell" their works. This is of course untrue, and twenty years' acquaintance with a variety of Soviet artists and collectors have convinced me that the art is of crucial importance to the large number of artists in the Soviet Union who do not hold a secure official position.

PETER L. BOULTON,  
School of European Studies,  
University of Sussex, Arts Building,  
Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QN.

## Harry Stack Sullivan

Sir—In his discussion of Harry Stack Sullivan (April 1), Leslie Farber describes the "burn-over" district as a strip between Albany and Buffalo in New York State. True that Joseph Smith launched the Mormon movement there, but to assume that the same environmental determinants acted on Sullivan almost eighty years later is stretching a geo-causality, especially since the crow flies Sullivan's birthplace of Norwich is a good eighty miles south of the Albany-Buffalo strip. In its burnt-out times that region was defined as the area along the old Erie Canal (of "and the gin is 's'gettin low" fame). Norwich and Syracuse are in the upper Susquehanna watershed, and are unquestionably known to many as "Groundhog Land", where most roads point, and most interest lies, southward.

D. E. STEWARD,  
Spalenorweg 41, 4051 Basel, Switzerland.

## Active or Passive?

Sir—Peter Reading (May 6) quotes a remark from Eric Jong's *Boy to Save Your Own Life* which catches the eye: "I suddenly realise that I could fuck a different man every weekday afternoon... Now I could fuck a different man every weekday afternoon, but I was puzzled to be told that Miss Jong or her heroine could. What puzzles me is—I think—a matter of English usage not sexual practice."

Miss Jong may be a better authority on the usage than I am. A pre-occupation, publicly article in one of the Sunday magazines told us that she used to teach English literature at a university—though I suppose English literature is not a rich source for this particular word. Still, it appears to be a more frequently used part of her vocabulary than it is of mine, and perhaps anyway American usage is different. But I wonder.

We live in a permissive age and I fear the lexicographers will tell us that if Miss Jong says it, it must be said. I do not intend to be reactionary and suggest that we do without the word in print, for the rights of literature and self-expression must be respected.

## Among this week's contributors

- ALAN ANGELL is the author of *Politics and the Labour Movement in Chile*, 1972.
- GEORGINA BATTISCOMBE's books include *Queen Alexandra*, 1969, and *Shakespeare*, 1974.
- SIR ROBERT BIRLEY was Head Master of Eton College from 1949 to 1963.
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- GEORGE V. GRAY is a psychoanalyst and assistant editor of *The Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*.
- GEORGE HORRIS is the author of *The Trial of Doctor Socher*, 1973.
- GEORGINA HOWELL is the editor of *In Vogue*, 1975.
- P. D. JAMES's most recent novel is *The Black Tower*, 1975.
- A. J. KRAUSHUISER is the author of *Shakespeare, Abbot of La Trappe*, 1974.
- H. R. LOVIN's books include *The Norman Conquest*, 1965, and *Alfred the Great*, 1967.
- WILLIAM MCNEILL is the author of *A World History*, 1967, and *Venice: The Hinge of Europe 1081-1797*, 1974.
- H. T. MASON is Professor of European Literature at the University of East Anglia.
- GEORGINA MIXES's recent books include *The Spy Who Died of Boredom*, 1973, and *Charlie*, 1976.
- DERVLA MURPHY's *On a Shoestring* to Coorg was published last year.
- STELLA MARY NEWTON is the author of *Renaissance Theatre Costume*, 1975.
- G. E. L. OWEN is Professor of Ancient Philosophy at the University of Cambridge.
- D. C. M. PARR is the author of *Latin America and British Trade, 1806-1914*, 1972.
- GEORGINA REES's books include *A Chapter of Accidents*, 1972, and *Brief Encounters*, 1974.
- W. W. ROSSON is the author of *The Signs Among Us*, 1968, and *Modern English Literature*, 1970.
- GEORGINA STEINER's most recent book is *After Balzac*, 1975.
- ANNE STEVENSON's collection of poems, *Travelling Behind Glass*, was published in 1974.
- J. I. M. STEWART's most recent novel, *The Madonna of the Astrolobe*, was published earlier this year.
- BARRY SUPPER is the author of *The Royal Exchange Assurance*, 1970.
- J. R. VINCENT's *The Foundation of the British Liberal Party* was published last year.
- RICHARD WAGG's books include *Victory of 1972*, and *Victory in Vietnam*, 1974.
- ALAN YOUNG is the editor of *Edgell: Rickwood's Essays and Opinions 1921-31*, 1974.
- A Voice from the Chorus*, by Abraham Lincoln, is the author of *Translating by Kitt, Fitzhugh and Max Hayward*.

## Dramas of detachment

By Nicola Bradbury

ELSA NETTELS:  
James and Conrad  
289pp. University of Georgia Press, \$12.

Henry James's only published criticism of Conrad appeared in the TLS of April 2, 1906, and placed the author of *Chance* "absolutely alone as a votary of the way to do a thing that shall make it undergo most doing". The comment reveals as much about its author as its subject. Conrad has, as the review, his own "Henry James' Appreciation" (1905), as Elsa Nettels points out, had offered unqualified admiration, "an eloquent inextinguishable creative power".

Resemblances between the works of James and Conrad have often been noticed; but Elsa Nettels's book is the first sustained examination of their relationship. The two authors knew each other for nearly twenty years, spanning the stage in each one's career which is most difficult yet rewarding to study. Three letters from James to Conrad and six from Conrad to James have been published, but in their fiction resemblance multiplies, inviting correlation.

James and Conrad justify the implicit claims made by comparisons pursued throughout the book, drawing on unpublished letters and manuscript drafts besides the published criticism and fiction of both authors. Elsa Nettels's scholarship is both comprehensive and remarkably comprehensive. Though she examines the relationship of Maupassant and Flaubert to James and Conrad, besides noting, among others, links with Turgenyev, Ibsen, Zola, and, interestingly, Scott and Pater, she brings reference and paraphrase with direct quotation so that her argument is immediately accessible.

Through familiarity with her material, however, allows Elsa Nettels to select and discriminate with stimulating clarity. Discussing the approach to fiction, she demonstrates that James's emphasis on form corresponds to Conrad's emphasis on style. In criticism, James uses metaphors to illustrate ideas; Conrad, to express the emotions associated with writing. In the novels and stories, there is a tendency for James to preserve distance between the artist and his world which Conrad, for all his awareness of alienation, yearns to overcome. Both authors, in different ways, exhibit the "double consciousness" which gave Stieglitz in James's *Amherst*, "detachment in his real and curiosity in his indifference".

In the chapter entitled "The Drama of Perception" subtitled

and detailed comparisons of specific works show how James and Conrad alike value artistic form, yet maintain a vital link between the aesthetic and the moral; for both, "The soul of novel is its action". The authors differ, however, in their approach to character: for James the character's identity is paramount but Conrad longs to identify his characters in loyal fellowship. It is this underlying truth that is masked by the contrast between knowledge in James's fiction and in Conrad, the distinction demonstrates a fine and steady distinction.

Elsa Nettels contrasts the discerning eye for the discrepancies between critical performance and literary performance which is supported by her sensitivity to their own personalities.

More might perhaps have been made of this fundamental comparison. In a chapter on "Romance" it is briefly promoted, though not pursued, through a stimulating and fascinating analogy between James and Conrad and the Wordsworth and Coleridge of the *Lyrical Ballads*. James internalizes, while Conrad externalizes the romance plot; patterns of simile and attack are more revealing than the almost moribund of romance, which is more prevalent in the younger man's work.

That James, like Balzac, knew his characters and their world by loving them, rather than loving them as he knew them, is stressed in two chapters on "Satire" and "The Grotesque". Elsa Nettels contrasts James's detail with Conrad's tendency to sarcastic generalization. She notes how in contrast to the figures James satirizes—psychological and social types defined by madmen—most of Conrad's satirical figures are identified by their function in a political system; but she does not drift from imaginative attention towards vague biographical, political, or philosophical generalization.

This sort of refusal to compromise ever complexity in James and Conrad is unfortunately less evident in the chapter where it is most needed: in examining "Tragedy". This is the most effective chapter, because the power we feel in James and Conrad comes not only from their richness of tragic vision, but from their alternatives, and inevitable loss, as from the mingling with tragedy in their work of already treated in the account of romance, satire, and the grotesque.

This quibble, however, scarcely qualifies sustained praise for *James and Conrad*. Tackling an extremely difficult subject with scholarly confidence, and without obscuring the intractability of her material, Elsa Nettels makes a valuable and exciting contribution to James and Conrad scholarship.

## Within and without the walls

By Georgina Howell

ROBERT BRANDAU (Editor):  
De Meyer  
With a biographical essay by Philippe Jullian  
160pp including 72 plates. Thames and Hudson, £12.50.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue  
With an introduction by Ezra Bowen  
96pp including 42 photographs. Gordon Fraser, £3.95.

Adjacent and overlapping in time, the subjects of these recently published books of photography are a world apart. De Meyer stands for art by contrivance, Lartigue for the sublime snapshot that catches and extracts the essence of a moment, in the Proustian sense. De Meyer was an almost exact contemporary of Proust, and was thirty-three when Lartigue took his first picture at the age of seven. In 1901, De Meyer, lavishly produced by Thames and Hudson, does justice to the photographer's imposing portraitures, whereas Jacques-Henri Lartigue, produced by Fraser at a third of the price in the *Aperture* series, does no more than indicate the charm of Lartigue's work.

Photography for De Meyer was a device of art and science, and using an 8 x 10 camera fitted with a lens that was ground to pinpoint sharpness in the centre with soft focus edges, with emulsion coating, and a gaze and back lighting, he was able to create idealized and spellbinding visions—pictures suffused with light and poetic delicacy. A camera magazine said in 1914: "he deliberately focuses his camera not upon the sparkle of an eye but upon the light that illuminates the eye." He once poured

the pictures of flowers on to the floor to deflect just enough light into the face of his sister.

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# To the Editor

## Hardbacks and Paperbacks

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We have recently had an interesting case. We were able to publish a book of 272 pages in hardback at £3.50 because it received a certain amount of subvention and, more particularly, because it was produced by what are loosely described as non-conventional methods. The book sold well, and we wondered whether the fact that the price is, in comparison with the current run of academic monographs, a low one, might have had something to do with it. We therefore asked one of Britain's leading booksellers whether that might be the case, only to be told, and we are not surprised, that it was impossible for them to say to what extent the comparatively low price had been a factor in the success of the book.

Finally, Mr Brockbank pleads with existing university presses to revert to the manufacture of readable books that are likely to stay the course. Our own view is that if all the other factors involved lead us to produce an academic monograph at a price which runs into double figures, then the reader is entitled to have an agree-

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- GEORGE HORRIS is the author of *The Trial of Doctor Socher*, 1973.
- GEORGINA HOWELL is the editor of *In Vogue*, 1975.
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- H. R. LOVIN's books include *The Norman Conquest*, 1965, and *Alfred the Great*, 1967.
- WILLIAM MCNEILL is the author of *A World History*, 1967, and *Venice: The Hinge of Europe 1081-1797*, 1974.
- H. T. MASON is Professor of European Literature at the University of East Anglia.
- GEORGINA MIXES's recent books include *The Spy Who Died of Boredom*, 1973, and *Charlie*, 1976.
- DERVLA MURPHY's *On a Shoestring* to Coorg was published last year.
- STELLA MARY NEWTON is the author of *Renaissance Theatre Costume*, 1975.
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- W. W. ROSSON is the author of *The Signs Among Us*, 1968, and *Modern English Literature*, 1970.
- GEORGINA STEINER's most recent book is *After Balzac*, 1975.
- ANNE STEVENSON's collection of poems, *Travelling Behind Glass*, was published in 1974.
- J. I. M. STEWART's most recent novel, *The Madonna of the Astrolobe*, was published earlier this year.
- BARRY SUPPER is the author of *The Royal Exchange Assurance*, 1970.
- J. R. VINCENT's *The Foundation of the British Liberal Party* was published last year.
- RICHARD WAGG's books include *Victory of 1972*, and *Victory in Vietnam*, 1974.
- ALAN YOUNG is the editor of *Edgell: Rickwood's Essays and Opinions 1921-31*, 1974.
- A Voice from the Chorus*, by Abraham Lincoln, is the author of *Translating by Kitt, Fitzhugh and Max Hayward*.

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# Conscience of the Commons

By Norman Gash

JOHN POLLOCK:  
Wilberforce  
368pp. Constable, 58.

To be keeper of the conscience of the House of Commons is not so much an impossible as an improbable role. The House is quick to detect hypocrites and prigs. A public moralist who is not a professional politician and who escapes being one or the other. Yet in the twenty years from 1805 to 1825 William Wilberforce came nearer than any man before or since to achieving that improbable role. He was not of course without his failings. The pro-Caroline mob at the time of the Queen's trial in 1820 called him Dr Can-well. He was accused of caring for the black slaves of the West Indian sugar plantations and ignoring the white slaves of the Yorkshire woolen mills. "Mr Wilberforce's humanity will go all lengths that it can with safety and discretion," sneered Hazlitt, "but it is not to be supposed that it should lose him his seat for Yorkshire, the smile of Majesty, or the countenance of the loyal and pious." Yet this mis-spattering was only the inevitable accompaniment of a public career. It never made any significant number of the politicians at Westminster doubt his integrity or waver in their affection.

To refute the allegations of Cobden and Hazlitt is not difficult. Copland did it effectively over half a century ago. Wilberforce clearly did care about the poor, the distressed and the defenceless in his own society, and tried harder than most of his fellow-countrymen in alleviating their lot. On matters of principle he never allowed personal friendship or other considerations to influence his decisions. But a man can only do so much in a lifetime and his first commitment was to the abolition of slavery. The real biographical problem is how to make Wilberforce appear human without detracting from his genuine religiousness; how to explain the phenomenon of a good man who was also wealthy, respectable, popular and amusing.

What was Wilberforce's secret? He was not a saint in the traditional sense; though the steel frame he wore to correct the curvature of the spine in the latter years of his life and the chronic bayer of his stomach necessitated regular dosing with opium might stand for the hair-shirt and flagellation of an earlier period. He lacked either the utter sanctity or the utter simplicity

that sainthood requires. What he possessed were more earthly qualities: kindness, dedication, courage, unflinching cheerfulness, and a disarming boyishness. Though not a fool, he was not an intellectual. He wrote one unkind journal entry with a certain sting of truth, "without any fixed opinions, except on the Slave Trade and the essential doctrines of Christianity."

He shared many of the social prejudices of his class; but he could never have become a successful professional politician and was remarkably insensitive to the kind of considerations that guided their actions. Yet he was not only a slave but a nice man. He was prepared to think the best of most people; to be blind to their faults, kind to their virtues. He was also a very sociable man; even though his sociability caused him occasional consternation. He enjoyed life and conveyed his enjoyment to others. Fanny d'Arbury found his "mixture of simplicity and vivacity" captivating. Lord Milton singled out as his most remarkable trait "the close union between the most rigid principles and the most gay and playful disposition." It was this which earned him the respect and liking of his hard-bitten contemporaries and prevented his morality from becoming sanctimonious.

After his death two of his sons continued his personality in five volumes of pious Victorian biography. Three successful attempts have been made in this century to distil his life into a single volume. In 1923, Robin Furneaux's book in 1974; and now John Pollock's. All three are worth reading. Copland's, though based on printed sources, was an elegant, elegant series of illustrations, setting his subject in careful relationship to his age. Mr Furneaux's book, the longest of the three, was a spacious portrait which provided not only a full background and a detailed series of illustrations, but also illuminating detail from original sources. Inaccessible to all but the specialist, it was displaced as the central work on Wilberforce. Mr Pollock's new book can, nevertheless, stand confidently beside its two predecessors.

The essential portrait of Wilberforce that emerges from all three authors is remarkably similar; and there are no great divergences in the structure of the narratives. But Mr Pollock's style is essentially different. He has ransacked a wider area of manuscript sources than Mr Furneaux but the attraction of his book is less in the necessarily minor snippets of fresh information he has uncovered than in his own more individual approach. Using a modern technique of small, lively detail, without much analysis or perspective, he

# Flirting with the Queen

By Georgina Battiscombe

THEO ARONSON:  
Victoria and Disraeli  
The Making of a Romantic Partnership  
212pp. Cassell, £5.50.

Theo Aronson has the knack of giving fresh interest to an old story. He has nothing new to tell us about Queen Victoria and Disraeli but he makes very readable hook out of what we already know of the famous couple. He is not a fanatical admirer of Disraeli but he is a fair and balanced critic of both.

The first paragraph sets the theme: "Throughout her life there was one thing on which Queen Victoria always depended. This was, if not exactly the love, then at least the guidance, attention and protection of a man. Stress should be laid on the word 'attention'. To call Victoria a flirt would be to do her justice; it would be fair enough, however, to say that she liked men who were prepared to flirt with her—the Tsarovich Alexander, Napoleon III, and above all Benjamin Disraeli, to whom flirtation came as naturally as breathing. 'He had quite easily embarked on his decorous flirtation with the Queen', writes Mr

# The Ricardo years

By S. G. Checkland

HARRY GORDON:  
Political Economy in Parliament  
1819-1823  
246pp. Macmillan, £10.

Ricardo's parliamentary career has long intrigued students of economic thought and policy. Barry Gordon's new book, *Political Economy in Parliament 1819-1823*, follows the chronology of Ricardo's debate on the themes of the economic system around which argument centred in the years 1819-23. *Political Economy in Parliament 1819-1823* follows the chronology of Ricardo's debate on the themes of the economic system around which argument centred in the years 1819-23.

Yet the somewhat simplistic presentation does have the simple effect of revealing the complexity of the real situation, the possibility of reducing the vested interests of the protagonists to any simple class pattern, and the difficulties that are encountered when general theory is brought up against reality in open debate.

The promise in the blurb of some discussion of Marx in relation to Ricardo is not very adequately fulfilled. The belief that Ricardianism was the creed of a bourgeoisie, as myth, largely on the ground that Ricardianism favoured the unproductive rentier, including the wealthier landowning aristocracy. A fuller discussion of the relationship of Ricardo to class is called for. It is suggested that Ricardo provided a doctrinal posture for Lord Liverpool's administration as it sank into intellectual or maybe moral bankruptcy. This seems a surprising verdict.

The view that Ricardianism was an all-conquering orthodoxy might have been tested by seeing against the issues on which Ricardo prevailed those on which he lost—his government debt by a capital levy (so as to minimize budgetary intervention in the economy), his property rights of the note issue out of the bank and make it a responsibility of the Bank of England, and his unsuccessful resistance to the Act for shipwreckers.

The major question over which Ricardo was obliged to qualify the optimism of his economic equilibrium machinery, in the Commons was a plain statement that a rapid expansion of capital and new investment, if not accompanied by birth rate, "must, to some degree, operate prejudicially to the well-being of the labouring classes." By so saying he put much of his general system at risk.

# The imprint of Europe

By William McNeill

J. M. ROBERTS:  
The Hatcherian History of the World  
1125pp. Hutchinson, £9.95.

It is a striking testimony to the power of tradition over human minds that all world histories written by Westerners conform either to a linear pattern deriving from Jewish and Christian ideas about God's purposes for men, or else to a cyclic pattern traceable to pagan Greek speculation about cosmic time and constitutional changes in city states. To be sure, a really agile mind can combine the two, as A. J. Toynbee did in his later years, contriving a nebulous spiral model for universal history; while others, less philosophical, despair of world history per se, and simply divide the record of the past into local histories, whether of civilizations or of continents, each unique unto itself. But these variants lack the east-intelligibility of the two standard patterns; and human minds seem drawn towards simplicity. How else make sense of the human past?

The ambition to make the human past intelligible lies at the heart of J. M. Roberts's *Hatcherian History of the World*. It falls squarely into the linear, post-Christian mould for world history, and is firmly Eurocentric throughout. The author wants to explain how the world got to be the way it is at the start of the last quarter of the twentieth century. "Presentism" accordingly governs the way he distributes attention, in ancient and medieval as well as in modern times. Russian history and United States history, for example, get a relatively full treatment even in ages when their importance in the world as a whole was slight. On the other hand, peoples once important and no longer so—the steppes nomads, for instance—get a short shrift indeed, since they are not part of the modern world Roberts wants to explain; at least not obviously so.

The result will seem hearteningly familiar to most English readers. Half the book deals with events since 1500; one hundred pages—about an eleventh part of the whole—treat of affairs since 1945. This part of the book brings few surprises. It offers an admirably well-crafted summary of what liberal-minded speakers of English know and believe about the world since 1945. The young Albert Einstein, who was a world of men, writes Mr Aronson. Roger Ford, on the contrary, tells of "the feminine influence, at once comfortable and steady," which surrounded Albert in childhood. It is misleading to speak of the Church of Ireland in 1869 as being "at that time, Anglican". The Church of Ireland has always been and still remains part of the Anglican communion. Some protest too should be raised against the extraordinary use of the word "convert" to describe the changeover of the ancient Orient, the freshness of Roberts's reportage diminishes; but enthusiasm picks up again with Jews and Greeks, only to slack off towards superficiality when he comes to deal with ancient India and China. These variations reflect, I think, Roberts's own level of interest in and familiarity with the topics in question. Matters closest to the European past excite him most; matters that seem marginal to the present—he finds less interesting, and dismisses, with corresponding haste.

As long as peoples and cultures directly ancestral to modern European civilization were themselves central to human affairs during the ages, in dealing with the history of dealing with world history does not involve such gross distortion of perspective as to be troublesome. The way the world might have appeared to a hypothetical observer, endowed with a capacity to know what was happening in all parts of the globe in 500 BC, might not concentrate quite so much on Greece and Palestine as Roberts does; but the primacy of classical Mediterranean civilization between 480 BC and AD 400 as compared to what was going on in India, China, America or anywhere else seems to me a defensible judgment; just as the primacy of the Near East in the third millennium BC seems a defensible judgment. But what happens when Europe becomes a backwater? What, in short, about what used to be called

# The imprint of Europe

By William McNeill

the Dark Ages? What should a world historian do about a millennium or so during which the civilizations of India, China and Islam were dominant, by almost any standard, distinctly in advance of anything known in Latin Christendom? If one takes the view that what matters in the past is how things got to be the way they are, then Christendom's centrality in the darkest hours of its Dark Age can still be plausibly maintained; and this is what Roberts does. In Book 4, "The Age of Diverging Traditions", which deals with the centuries between AD 500 and AD 1500, half the space is devoted to Christendom—a total of 108 pages. China, by contrast, gets nineteen pages, and these pages treat of China from 221 BC to AD 1800. Yet, as any reader of Marco Polo will remember, China far exceeded Europe in skills, wealth and population in the thirteenth century—and for many centuries on either side of Marco Polo's age as well.

The projection of present relationships upon the past as an organizing principle has other distressing consequences. This is specially evident in Roberts's treatment of Islam, which, as the closest relative to Christendom among the world's civilizations, has always been a particular focus of his interest. He concentrates on explaining how it was that despite early mastery of critical skills, China lacked the conditions which "in Europe produced a dynamic progressive society." Tenyson says that the same idea in Lockley Hall more than a century ago when he wrote: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

One might suppose that the "Post-European Age", which is the title Roberts gives to the most recent fifty years of world history, would involve a stronger sensitivity to the plurality of human civilizations and cultures in times past. Yet that consciousness seems instead to have flooded into the English-speaking world after the 1939-45 World War, when the ancient and medieval past of the world as a whole was flooded into the English-speaking world after the 1939-45 World War, when the ancient and medieval past of the world as a whole was flooded into the English-speaking world after the 1939-45 World War.

What was final for Islam about the twelfth century Christian era? What, in the evolution of human kind, poetry were yet to appear in their full glory, and when the elaboration of Sufi mystical thought and discipline were still in their initial stages? And what about Ottoman culture, architecture and literature, not to mention the court cultures of Safavid Persia and Mughal India? To be sure, these later developments of Islamic civilization meant little or nothing to Latin Christians, and even less to the modern world. But a handful of scholarly eccentricities. Roberts can therefore dismiss such far-reaching transformations of Islamic society and culture as trifles (though he is aware of at least some of them) because their contribution to the modern world is—or appears to be—slight.

All the same, the distortion that results from viewing Islam so restlessly in terms of the 1970s presents its own problems. I am reminded of Andreas Mantegna's painting, "The Dead Christ", which offers the observer a worm's-eye view of that the soles of the feet loom menacingly vast in the foreground, while the rest of Christ's body appears in acutely foreshortened form atop the towering feet. Such an angle of vision is, of course, a distortion, and demands a lively interplay between our normal image of the human form, standing erect, and the shapes Mantegna offers the viewer, before we can understand what he is looking at. But what if the viewer were to lack a mental image of the human form in its erect posture? In such a case, surely, he would simply misunderstand what he was looking at. Yet this, it seems to me, is the position most of Roberts's readers will be in, lacking any independent notion of the shape and character of Islamic civilization to play off against Roberts's limp and supine portrait.

The Eurasian steppes peoples suffer a similar, perhaps even more drastic, foreshortening in Roberts's book. For at least 3,000 years, nomads, traders and conquerors, issuing from and traversing the

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# Snow-scooter spring

By Dervla Murphy

MARIE HERBERT:  
The Reindeer People  
187pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £4.50.

Travel books recording the standardisation of mankind are multiplying fast. On the first page of *The Reindeer People* Marie Herbert explains that "for many years Jokkmokk had been a stronghold of the Forest Lapps... But now the character of the place had changed—Lapps there still were, but few of them traditional, and Jokkmokk had become a business and tourist centre for the Swedes". Then she describes driving "for miles after miles along the ice-covered road, which had been cleared and graded by the snow-ploughs from time to time to long wooden barriers, ten feet high, lined the road—they were drift fences which would prevent the highways from being buried... These quotations set the tone and help to explain why *The Reindeer People* comes as a disappointment after *The Snow People*, which described Mrs Herbert's two years with the Polar Eskimos. Among the Lapps man is now firmly in control of nature, snow-scooters have replaced reindeer-drawn sledges, families in even the remotest areas watch fifth-rate American television films, youths long to be pop-stars and yet another ancient way of life has been annihilated. All this is inevitable—even desirable, many will agree. Yet it leaves me with an aching awareness of humanity's inner impoverishment and degradation. Nor does Marie Herbert offer much evidence that welfare benefits and technology have increased the Lapps' contentment.

As a sensitive and civilized

observer, Mrs Herbert was clearly distressed and not inspired by the present plight of the Lapps. Her earlier book, *The Snow People*, which she wrote with enthusiasm, has been genuinely aroused. Here it seems that she is not longing to share a memorable experience so much as to bring forth another book. As a result there is far too much blatant padding and the "tidying up" process has been skipped. Frequently more words are used than would best have served the purpose.

## A spell of island-hopping

By Philip Snow

GEORGE WOODCOCK:  
South Sea Journey  
341pp. Faber and Faber. £7.50.

The countless accounts of travellers to the Pacific have ranged from those who have passed through so quickly that they have absorbed none of its tranquillity to those, like it so much that they have stayed for ever. *South Sea Journey*, compiled mostly from published articles, describes a journey to some groups four years ago, lasting in all—as far as can be guessed—given a few months. Impressions of so short a stay must here and there run close to the superficial. There is no bibliography, and the history of the territories visited is sketchy: one feels accordingly that the author has not read widely on the groups but is relying principally on what he sees and hears.

The blurb implies that this book is mainly an account of the author's adventures while accompanying four Lapp men on their springtime trek to the coast with migrating reindeer. Yet we do not start trekking until page 107, much more than halfway through, by which stage Marie Herbert is showing all the symptoms of autoboredom. She gives many details about her journey, including the wildest Finnmark on a sledge pulled by a smelly, noisy snow-scooter; but she never enables us to feel as she felt. And we get

These criticisms apart, it must be said that the book is thoroughly readable and the judgments expressed for the most part perceptive and sound.

George Woodcock wanted to see, if briefly, groups long affected by the tourism which has made such inroads in the Pacific in the last decade. However for this reason, he was eschewed by him for this reason: the Marquesas and Easter Island for their remoteness. He does not refer to the Tsimotom and Pitcairn, as yet beyond the tourist's tentacles. He and his wife confined their visit to the Pacific to make sure of finding some tranquility. The story in Western Samoa which they first went to is probably the best piece of reporting. Avoiding the capital, Apia, after the impact of the Catholic cathedral's bells at 4.30 in the morning, they moved to a country district to absorb the character and quality of the village way of life. Samoa's essential rural strength is contrasted with the ineffectuality of centralized authority.

only a blurred picture of what must be one of the most awe-inspiring landscapes in the world. But here I am sympathetic with Mrs Herbert. Any form of motor transport makes it almost impossible to establish real contact with one's surroundings.

It is surprising to find this sophisticated young woman, who has lived for years among primitive people, getting into a cloy flap at the prospect of travelling for a few weeks. Given the circumstances, surrounding her journey, her publications and tremors seem quite remarkably silly—and therefore uncharacteristic. I suspect that somebody advised her to introduce this element of

The interests closest to Mr Woodcock are not historical (prehistory) but social and political. Not knowing the languages can be a disadvantage in putting the ear to the political ground but, by and large, his assessments are shrewd. On the social scene there is perception in what he observes.

The ego must be resolutely masked in Samoa society, and one way of telling a man of high family in a crowd is said to be his avoidance of talking about himself—though on ceremonial occasions his orator is allowed to make up for the ritual modesty of the chief displays. This does not mean that the Samoan is without pride, for the assumption that one's claims to fame are known and therefore need not be advertised betokens a special form of arrogance.

After Samoa, Tonga. Mr Woodcock is excellent in his contrast of these two archipelagos. The fact that Tonga has a king accounts, in his view, for national effort being focused on the court in the capital.

pseudo-drama "to live things. However, she should have said that it was bound to be so, but the most simple-minded of such others' company. There were no tensions or like most peasants, are chivalrous and Marie Herbert, splendidly adaptable and at ease travelling companion.

For all its defects, the book of this book will be justified. It draws attention to the exotic of the Lapps and thus inhibits who look upon them as pushed around in the sordid national tourist-trade game.

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### LIBRARIANS

#### HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY

##### DEPUTY LIBRARIAN

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons with professional experience in academic librarianship. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

#### ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the post of Deputy Librarian. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

#### BRITISH RECORDS ASSOCIATION

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the post of Librarian. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

#### BOOKS & PRINTS

World History Catalogue (1966-1970) and other books and prints are available for sale. The price is £1.00 per volume. The books are published by the British Records Association. The price is £1.00 per volume. The books are published by the British Records Association.

#### CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC

##### LIBRARY AND LEARNING RESOURCES SERVICE

##### BIBLIOTHECAIRE ASSISTANT

Applications are invited for the post of Bibliotecaire Assistant. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

##### EUROPEAN ART AND ARTISTS

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the post of Librarian. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

##### NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

##### SCHOOL LIBRARIAN

Applications are invited from suitably qualified persons for the post of School Librarian. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

##### STOP WORRYING ABOUT THAT

stop worrying about that. The book is available for sale. The price is £1.00 per volume. The books are published by the British Records Association. The price is £1.00 per volume. The books are published by the British Records Association.

##### WANTED - person with interest in

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##### ALL books by post - Post Book

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##### EDUCATIONAL

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##### LECTURES AVAILABLE

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## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### The Netherlands University of Utrecht Faculty of Letters

Applications are invited for the post of

#### READER in Art History

with special reference to that of the Middle Ages. The person appointed will be expected to teach and carry out research. Teaching will be at all levels and is in the form of lectures, seminars and the supervision of the postgraduate student. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

Salary: Dufl. 5,247,- to 7,525,- gross per month (1976 scale).

Those who are interested in this post and those who know of possible candidates are asked to write, by close 21st June, 1977, to the chairman of the Appointment Committee, Prof. E. de Jongh, Department of Art History, Drift 26, Utrecht, The Netherlands, tel. 030-53 22 12.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION LIBRARIANS

The Equal Opportunities Commission is seeking a Librarian to be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

The Librarian should have had at least five years' professional experience, preferably in the social sciences and the humanities. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

Applications for these posts should be sent to the Equal Opportunities Commission, 100 Grosvenor Street, London, W1A 3AB. The salary will be in the range £3,186-£3,861 p.a. plus £312 p.a. supplement. The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the library and for the supervision of the staff. The post is full-time, 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Closing date June 10, 1977.

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### Islington Libraries

#### DEPUTY BOROUGH LIBRARIAN

(£7,839-£8,421 p.a. inclusive)

Islington has ten branch libraries, one mobile and a newly extended Central Library; additionally, specialist services exist for the housebound and children. As well as deputising for the Borough Librarian the successful candidate will have direct responsibility for the day-to-day running and development of these services and the appointment, motivation and morale of staff. We are looking for someone who can create with all the staff